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California's marine reserve network now complete

In the works since 1999, California's reserve, meant to protect marine life, is the largest network of undersea parks in the continental United States.

December 19, 2012 | By Kenneth R. Weiss, Los Angeles Times

Surviving budget cuts, mobs of angry fishermen and death threats, California officials today completed the largest network of undersea parks in the continental United States — 848 square miles of protected waters that reach from the Oregon state line to the Mexican border.

The final segment of marine reserves, along the state's north coast, becomes official today. Its 137 square miles of protected waters reflect an unusual agreement reached among Native American tribes, conservation groups and fishermen to preserve tribal traditions while protecting marine life from exploitation.

All told, the dozen-year effort has set aside 16% of state waters as marine reserves, including 9% that are off-limits to fishing or gathering of any kind.

State officials got to work shortly after the Legislature passed the Marine Life Protection Act in 1999. It directed them to consider a statewide network of protected waters, modeled after a familiar strategy on land — setting up parks and refuges to conserve wildlife, said Michael Sutton, a California Fish and Game commissioner.

"It's not rocket science," Sutton said. "If you protect wildlife habitat and you don't kill too many, wildlife tends to do well. We've done that on land with the waterfowl population. Now, we've done it in the ocean for fish."

Marine reserves have proliferated in the last decade, particularly in remote areas such as the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands, the Phoenix Islands and the Northern Mariana Islands.

But California's network of reserves is the only one established near a heavily populated coastline. The state issues 2 million fishing licenses a year.

The network got its start from the late Jim Donlon, an avid sport fisherman from Oxnard who lamented the disappearance of the big fish he used to catch around the Channel Islands off Santa Barbara. He set in motion a first round of public meetings that resulted in protecting certain rocky reefs, sandy bottoms and other areas around the islands to allow fish populations to recover.

Initially, these reserves were seen as "an insurance policy" against inadequate fisheries management that had allowed rockfish and other marine life populations to plunge to record lows, said Steve Gaines, dean of the Bren School of Environmental Science and Management at UC Santa Barbara.

The idea: Protected waters would allow some fish to reach full size, and when they swam out of the reserve they would benefit local fishermen by getting caught.

Now, he said, scientists realize that marine reserves, if in the right places, can become a source of providing larvae to reseed larger regions and benefit entire fisheries.

"That's what's exciting about California's network," Gaines said. "It's big enough that it's going to benefit the species that occur all along the coast."

The size of the network is exactly what filled auditoriums with red-shirted, shouting fishermen, angry at impending closures of favored fishing spots. The fight has continued in the courts. So far, none of the lawsuits has prevailed.

The American Sportfishing Assn., the Virginia-based trade group of the tackle and sport fishing industry, hired Sacramento lobbyists and public relations firms, and organized anglers by the busload to try to derail the process.

The organization was delighted when Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger announced in 2004 that budget shortfalls required an indefinite postponement of the plan, said the association's vice president, Gordon Robertson. But what happened next, he said, outflanked the sportfishing industry.

Michael Mantell, a Sacramento lawyer who coordinates philanthropy and conservation, organized the David and Lucile Packard Foundation, the Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation, the Marisla Foundation and two others to pick up the state's costs, including paying for panels of local leaders to take testimony and make recommendations. So far, the foundations have spent more than \$23 million.

"The environmental community poured far more resources than the recreational fishing did," Robertson said. He vowed not to let that happen in other states.

Richard B. Rogers, a lifelong recreational fisherman and scuba diver, said the science won him over on the issue. After Schwarzenegger appointed him to the Fish and Game Commission, his work to help establish the reserves was, as he put it, "the single most important

thing I've done in life, other than marrying my wife and raising my five kids."

Yet it also put him in an awkward position: vilified as an enemy of his fellow fishermen.

"We got death threats," Rogers said. "There were threats of physical violence."

He remains annoyed that some question his allegiance to the sport, ignoring that he owns a boat, as well as many rods and reels. He supported the reserves for one reason, he said: "I want to make sure my grandchildren have some fish to catch."

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Berkeley Pier offers new outlook on bay

Tom Stienstra

Updated 11:35 pm, Saturday, December 29, 2012

What you'll see: One of the best launch points for a unique perspective of a familiar landscape is the 3,000-foot walk out to the end of Berkeley Pier in San Francisco Bay. You are surrounded by landmarks and waterfront views. You get a view across to the new section of the Bay Bridge and Treasure Island, with an expanse of water to the Golden Gate Bridge. From this vantage point, the bridge is framed by points of land. On the western horizon, silhouettes of Mount Tamalpais and Mount Burdell provide a backdrop. A trip like this can inspire you as the New Year approaches.

Along the way: Berkeley Pier can provide a spot in winter to catch perch, jacksmelt and flounder. Bait, tackle and advice provided at Berkeley Marina Sports Center.

Eastshore State Park: As you approach Berkeley Marina on University Avenue, you will be flanked on each side by a section of Eastshore State Park, a tidal wetland preserve that runs 8.5 miles along the shore of the bay and extends north to Richmond.

Shorebird Park: Located adjacent to the parking area for Berkeley Pier, it has picnic tables, a grassy area, waterfront and views to the south.

Cesar Chavez State Park: Located north of the boat launch area, it spans 90 acres with waterfront on three sides, with Dorothy Stegman Trail routed on park's perimeter, picnic areas and 17-acre off-leash dog area.

Windsurfing: The best spot is launching from the parking area for Shorebird Park; high tides only, best with north winds.

Boat ramp: \$15. One of the better boat ramps on the bay, with docks, parking, restroom, other facilities.

Bait/fishing boats: Berkeley Marina Sports Center, (510) 849-3333.

Cost: Access, parking for Berkeley Pier and the three parks is free.

Contacts: Berkeley Parks, Recreation and Waterfront, (510) 981-6700, ci.berkeley.ca.us; Berkeley Marina Sports Center, (510) 849-3333, berkeleymarinasportfishingcenter.com; Eastshore State Park, (510) 562-7275, parks.ca.gov; Cesar Chavez Park, Shorebird Park Nature Center, (510) 981-6720, ci.berkeley.ca.us; Berkeley Marina, harbormaster, (510) 981-6740, www.ci.berkeley.ca.us/marina

How to get there: From San Francisco, take Interstate 80 east over the Bay Bridge for 5.8 miles (get in the left lane) to the split. Take left fork to I-80, merge, get into the right lane and drive a short distance to Berkeley and the exit for University Avenue. Take that exit, merge onto University, continue a half mile to 7th Street. Make a U-turn to westbound University and drive over freeway and continue a half mile to the stop sign at a T intersection for Marina Boulevard.

To Berkeley Pier: At T intersection, turn left and drive (Berkeley Marina Sports Center will be on the right) to Seawall Drive (and the foot of Berkeley Pier ahead). Turn left to parking and Shorebird Park.

To Cesar Chavez Park: At T intersection, turn right on Marina and continue (it becomes Spinnaker Way) as it curves west to road's end (boat ramp is on the left, park is on the right).

Driving note: If coming from the north on I-80, take exit for University Avenue to stop sign. Turn right and drive about a half mile to the T intersection with Marina, then continue as above.

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[Experts Convene at "Sink or Swim" Event to Discuss NYC's Waterfront Restoration](#)

Posted by [alanna_malone](#) at 12/20/2012 3:31 PM CST

Roughly six weeks after Hurricane Sandy devastated lower Manhattan, Columbia University's Center for Urban Real Estate (CURE) and the Municipal Art Society held an event called "Sink or Swim: Principles and Priorities in a Post-Sandy Era" at the Museum of Jewish Heritage on Battery Place—one of the hardest hit areas.

The conference pulled together an impressive lineup of speakers including the Hon. Shaun Donovan (United States Secretary of Housing and Urban Development), Hon. Wim Kuijken (Delta Commissioner, the Delta Programme, Netherlands), and Hon. Ken Salazar (United States Secretary of the Interior). These officials gathered with city planners to discuss infrastructure solutions for New York City's waterfront. While the event was short on specific plans, it's clear that the rebuilding of the city needs to happen with an acknowledgement of worsening natural disasters and that it will be a coordinated effort among the local, state, and federal governments with urban planners, designers, and academics.

Secretary Shaun Donovan emphasized this need to address existing and potential risks and vulnerabilities. Under an executive order from President Obama, Mr. Donovan will be heading the Hurricane Sandy rebuilding task force: "My job is to work with states and local communities to decide what the vision is and what makes sense," Mr. Donovan said. "We are more than a checkbook. We are, I hope, a resource."



Secretary Shaun Donovan

He cited federal studies showing that FEMA mitigation measures can save approximately \$4 in damage for every \$1 spent. “We must look to the future—our response won’t be business as usual,” Mr. Donovan asserted. In early December, President Obama asked Congress for \$60 billion for Sandy relief, a request that Congress is still reviewing.

A “Technical Aspects” panel discussion featured experts in engineering, architecture, and urban design: Kate Orff (landscape architect and founder of SCAPE design studio), Eugenie L. Birch (Chair of Urban Research and Education at the University of Pennsylvania), Paul Farmer (Chief Executive Officer of the American Planning Association), and Dale Morris (Senior Economist at the Royal Netherlands Embassy in Washington, DC).



Technical Aspects panel discussion

Farmer believes that we need to collaborate with the Dutch and rethink our paradigms. He hopes universities will have more of a focus on climate disruption and effects so that the next wave of professionals will have a better understanding of these topics. Morris said we have to learn how to live safely with water and quoted Windell Curole, a coastal environment expert in New Orleans: “Elevation is the salvation from inundation.” Morris also reiterated the Dutch priorities for dealing with water: “retain, store, and drain.” He had recently spoken with the Army Corps of Engineers, who are “terrified” of the vulnerability of shores along New Jersey and Long Island. We know climate change and sea level rise is happening so we must build flexibility into these systems, he concluded.

Orff, a participant in [MoMA’s Rising Currents exhibition](#) back in early 2010, discussed building a more resilient waterfront by using both “hard” and “soft” infrastructure solutions but also stressed that we must be less carbon intensive.



Kate Orff, landscape architect and founder of SCAPE design studio

Birch argued that we have all the necessary tools and resources but are lacking an integrated agency to coordinate the rebuilding efforts. After Hurricane Sandy, for example, NYC didn't even have a comprehensive map of the area's infrastructure—many of the city agencies and utility companies have been using different maps of problem areas with no coordinated efforts to condense this information. "It's not rocket science," she says.

Jos van Alphen, special advisor to the Netherlands' Delta Commission, presented "Dutch Perspectives." Sixty percent of the Netherlands is flood prone, affecting over 9 million residents. "Uncertainty is not an excuse to wait and see," van Alphen said. "Our work is never done." Along with shortening coastlines and preparing multi-layered approaches, the commission develops flexible and adaptive strategies to connect short-term decisions with long-term challenges.



Jos van Alphen, special advisor to the Netherlands' Delta Commission

The commission takes into account future sea level rise, increased erosion, worsening storms, and increased river discharge in city planning. "Building with nature is our concept," van Alphen said.

The next panel discussion about management and investment strategies for urban resilience featured Vishaan Chakrabarth (Holliday Professor of Real estate Development and the Director of CURE), Robert K. Steel (Deputy Mayor for Economic Development), Christopher O. Ward (formerly executive director of the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey and commissioner of the city's Department of Environmental Protection), and Madelyn Wils (Hudson River Park Trust's President and Chief Executive Officer).



Urban Resilience panel discussion

“The water is an important part of our city and we will not retreat from it but take a long-term perspective on how to rebuild in an efficient, smart way,” Steel said. Wils agreed saying that about 80 percent of New York residents live in coastal areas (on less than 15 percent of the state’s property) and that we cannot avoid waterfront development.

Though Steel was hesitant to answer specific questions about NYC’s plans for the future, he asserted that the city is compiling a post event analysis that will be available at the end of February. He hopes this instance will continue to drive the discussion about climate change. “The reality is that we are organized so that consensus has to develop over time and it can be frustrating,” he said.

Chakrabarti added that there’s a very limited conversation on the national level regarding climate change, so cities must continue to lead the way. Ward is thankful that Donovan will be the “maestro” for rebuilding efforts. “In addition to the bully pulpit, he has the funding,” Ward said. “Some things we can do on our own but other things we have to work with the federal government. I’m optimistic that this will be a good exercise.”

After spending the morning touring damage at Liberty Island, United States Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar estimated the damage to national parks and other Department of Interior properties at \$429 million. He maintains that we will rebuild the affected areas even stronger than they were before.



United States Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar

Though it's clear that the city has a lot of work ahead to repair the devastation from Hurricane Sandy and prevent future damage from similar storms, hopefully this kind of integrated discussion will continue so that government representatives, designers, planners, developers, and international experts can learn from one another to create a more resilient metropolitan.

Photos by gilesashford.com



Silicon Valley at Significant Risk of Sea Level Rise Due to Climate Change

by [Morgana Matus](#), 12/31/12

filed under: [environmental destruction](#), [global warming](#), [News](#), [San Francisco](#), [Water Issues](#)



Silicon Valley office building photo from [Shutterstock](#)

Even the Internet is not immune to the effects of [climate change](#). Many of the world's most famous tech giants, such as [Facebook](#), Oracle, [Google](#), Intel, and LinkedIn are at risk of flooding due to rising seas. A recent piece by Scientific American's [ClimateWire](#) detailed the risks that companies face from global warming. Many areas of Silicon Valley are below sea level and close to the water, and a number facilities are vulnerable to fluctuating coastlines. Palo Alto, Santa Clara, Sunnyvale, San Jose and the iconic

Highway 1 could all be subject to massive flooding in the near future. Despite the threat of soggy facilities, Silicon Valley's biggest names have been mostly silent as to plans of how to deal with the rising Pacific.



Silicon Vally photo from [Shutterstock](#)

In the 1900's, California's Silicon Valley was formerly a cluster of orchards located near the coast known as the [Valley of Heart's Delight](#). When farmers pumped water for irrigation, the land was 3 to 10 feet below sea level. While dirt levees already exist to hold back ocean water, experts say the precautions are not nearly sufficient to deal with an already precarious situation. A draft study by the [Army Corps of Engineers](#) found that an extreme storm coupled with the fact businesses are already situated below sea level could cost billions of dollars in damage.

Companies have yet to share their plans with the [Silicon Valley Leadership Group](#), making some very nervous about what lies ahead for the industry. "When you talk about a 50-year time horizon in terms of sea level rise, people's eyes sort of glaze over because that's too long for planning," said Mike Mielke, vice president for environmental programs and policy of the group. He attributes this attitude to the short-term nature of the tech field, noting that businesses rarely plan more than five years ahead. Facebook, which is located directly on the water near a wildlife refuge off of the San Francisco Bay, is considering a new levee to deal with tidal waters.

Understanding the importance of Silicon Valley to California's economy, lawmakers such as Sen. Dianne Feinstein have pressed businesses to partner with one another to raise money and come up with solutions that could preserve the more than 250 campuses at significant risk. While some may choose to move out of the immediate area to stay dry, there is not much land at higher elevations in the vicinity, making available real estate a problem. With so much at stake, environmental groups and government agencies are pressing the tech industry to start making plans for a future affected by global warming.

Via [TreeHugger/Scientific American](#)

Images via Wikimedia Commons user [Sanjosecalifornia](#) and [Surka](#)

Read more: [Silicon Valley at Significant Risk of Sea Level Rise Due to Climate Change | Inhabitat - Sustainable Design Innovation, Eco Architecture, Green Building](#)